

ADAMS 14 SCHOOL DISTRICT

Management Partner

Proposal Prepared for:

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Inspired by the remarkable potential of youth

SECTION 1 - LETTER OF INTEREST

Please accept this formal letter of interest submitted by Zero Dropouts in response to the Request for Qualifications/Proposal (RFQ/P) for a Management Partner for the Adams 14 School District.

Zero Dropouts (ZD) is an educational social enterprise, with national scope, founded in Colorado in 2011 by educator and social entrepreneur Steve Dobo. The philosophy of ZD is grounded on the belief that all students have the ability to be successful in education and life. ZD focuses on supporting the continuum of education, specifically within schools and districts, from elementary to secondary through to post-secondary and on to college completion.

Cookie-cutter approaches are usually not effective, and most systemic, ongoing educational challenges need a comprehensive approach designed for each situation and challenge. Typically, the community, school, or district has the answers but needs a structure to surface the solutions and support implementation. ZD uses intensive local data analysis, combined with national research and research-based strategies to guide all of its assessment and implementation strategies.

Zero Dropouts understands that schools and school districts are embedded in communities and require comprehensive, full-service solutions – systemic solutions centered in design thinking. The company strives for collaborative approaches, paired with strong partnerships, in order to create sustainable solutions that build the capacity of the communities served. Key partnerships in this work include the one between ZD, the community, and key stakeholders (all those who are affected by decisions involving the systems in which they are embedded). Hearing the voice of community members, parents, and students is essential to arriving at inclusive and effective decisions.

The Zero Dropouts approach to this project will involve collaboration, diagnostic reviews, future visioning, implementation planning, consultation, and coaching. Through work across the state for the last two decades, Zero Dropouts has developed a network of high-level experts in all areas of education and in different types of schools and districts across the Front Range of Colorado. While Dobo will be the primary project lead, ZD has collected approximately 15 experts to be involved in this project based on their successful experiences as Superintendents, Board Chairs, Board members, community engagement consultants, cultural learning experts, high, middle and elementary school administrators, and district department heads. ZD has also identified a lead consultant in each area of the turnaround work. Dobo will work with each lead to coordinate the

diagnostic reviews and assessment, planning, and implementation process in each area and tap the network of expert consultants.

Dobo has partnered with over twenty school districts over a lifetime of work in the education field, creating over ten different types of alternative schools over the last fifteen years in Colorado. During the previous decade, he worked to substantially decrease the dropouts, increase the on-time graduates, and increase post-secondary enrollments across districts as diverse as Denver Public Schools, Englewood Schools, Aurora Public Schools, Boulder Valley Schools, Lewis-Palmer Schools, Brighton 27J Schools, Greeley-Evans District 6, Littleton Public Schools, Jefferson County Schools and eight other districts in Colorado Springs. Dobo has led a similar systemic improvement project in Greeley-Evans District 6 for the last three and a half years, brought in by then new Superintendent Deidre Pilch when she began her tenure with the district in July 2015. The work, fully detailed in the following proposal, has resulted in substantial improvements in the quality of the educational services of the district as well as positive gains on their key metrics.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to this RFP. Zero Dropouts looks forward to the continued process. If we can provide any additional information, please reach out to with the contact information below.



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SECTION 2 – EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS

1. Proposed Personnel.

The CEO of Zero Dropouts, Steve Dobo, will be the main point of contact for the project. Dobo is a nationally known practitioner, author, presenter, and researcher in education and dropout re-engagement. He founded Zero Dropouts, an educational social enterprise based in Denver that is committed to universal student success in education and life. Dobo consults with school districts across the country to improve high school graduation, dropout and post-secondary enrollment rates. Dobo blends his unique background in science, math, data and technology with his expertise and experience in counseling to approach his work in both a research, systemic and relationship-based way.

Dobo has worked extensively with homeless teens and families, parents in poverty, and youth at risk of education failure across the country and in various settings including municipal government, school districts, and nonprofit organizations. He earned his Bachelor's Degree in Physics from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and his Masters of Education in Counseling from Colorado State University. Dobo currently resides in Denver, Colorado. See attached resume for further information.

Zero Dropouts plans to employ a unique approach to staffing and personnel for this project. Dobo will use the assistance of external consultants, based off an analysis and diagnostic review of the district's and schools' needs. These consultants will come from a pool of experts around the state of Colorado – individuals who understand the culture and dynamics across the state and are poised to provide expert guidance on resolving pervasive educational issues within districts: superintendents, school board chairs and members, high, middle, and elementary school administrators, teachers, community engagement experts, culturally responsive practice experts, and district administrators.

2. Process for Added Capacity.

As mentioned above, Zero Dropouts will provide customized solutions to the district and schools, which requires the utilization of talent not currently built into staffing. Rather than approaching Adams 14 with prefabricated models and staff, Zero Dropouts will determine the needs of the district and schools and employ a cadre of experts accordingly. Below are examples of contract consultants who will support ZD and Adams 14 in their efforts. Resumes and bios of the additional consultants can be provided upon request.

In the area of Superintendent and Board of Education diagnostic review, assessment and coaching, Dobo will work with his team lead, Glenna Norvelle, Principal of the consulting firm GForce Strategies, and pull from the expertise of Deidre Pilch, current Superintendent of Greeley Evans District 6, Walt Cooper, Superintendent of Cheyenne Mountain School District and Colorado Superintendent of the Year in 2018, John Barry, Former Superintendent of Aurora

Public Schools and Colorado Superintendent of the Year in 2011, Theresa Pena, Former Denver Public Schools Board Chair, and James Mejia, Former Denver Public Schools Board Member.

For community, parent and teacher engagement, Dobo will work with his team lead, Kelli Pfaff, Principal of the consulting firm Modern Network and pull from the expertise of Glenna Norvelle to utilize the involvement of community, student and parent outreach organizations such as Project VOYCE (Voices of Youth Changing Education), YAASPA (Young Aspiring Americans for Social and Political Activism), Rise Colorado, Climb Higher Colorado, A+ Colorado, and Transform Education Now (TEN) to not only listen to the community, but also to utilize that voice to drive better outcomes for Adams 14 schools.

District-level department leader coaching will involve co-leads Kelli Pfaff and Glenna Norvelle as well as the expertise of Jesse Tijerina, the Director of Cultural Excellence for Greeley-Evans District 6, under the direction of Dobo.

Dobo will work with co-team leads, Brian Lemos, the Director of Instruction and English Language Development at Greeley-Evans District 6 and Board member of the Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents and Jesse Tijerina to address culturally responsive practices and diverse education and English language learning.

For High School Administrative team coaching, Dobo will tap into the expertise of Mark Cousins, Former Principal of Greeley Central High School, Jesse Tijerina and Clark Callahan, Current Principal of the Colorado High School Charter alternative school.

Dobo will engage Eliza Harding, Former Manager of Concurrent Enrollment at Denver Public Schools, for concurrent enrollment and post-secondary coaching.

Finally, for data analysis, Dobo will utilize the expertise of Andrew Palmer, Director of Student Information Services at Greeley-Evans District 6.

3. Organizational Experience.

Zero Dropouts (ZD) was founded by Steve Dobo in 2011 to work with states, school districts, schools and community-based organizations to improve education for all by improving the outcomes for the most at-risk populations. Previously, Dobo worked at Urban Peak, a comprehensive program serving homeless teens in Denver, running their education and employment programs. Along with improving their GED program, from 17 completers per year to 90 completers per year, Dobo co-founded a charter school in Denver Public Schools, called the Academy of Urban Learning, whose purpose is to serve highly mobile, transient, and homeless teens. Dobo left Urban Peak in 2005 to launch Colorado Youth for a Change (CYC), a nonprofit with the mission of solving Colorado's dropout problem. Through eight years of operating CYC, he worked with multiple school districts, including Denver Public Schools, Aurora Public Schools, Boulder Valley Schools and Englewood Schools, to implement strategies and programs which

improved dropout and graduation rates. This work, though not at the time categorized as turnaround work, involved systemically improving schools and districts in order to positively influence graduation and dropout outcomes. CYC was a part of a group fulfilling Governor Ritter's call to action to halve the dropout rate across the state in ten years - a goal which is now close to being achieved. CYC in its outreach work with students, and those specifically disrupted by the Manual High School closure, helped reduce the number of dropouts from over 4000 to substantially under 2000 in Denver Public Schools. Within each district and across the state-as-a-whole, there was a substantial decrease in the number of dropouts and a significant increase in the on-time graduation rates.

State/ District	Dropouts 05-06	Dropouts 13-14	Dropout Reduction	Grad Rate 05-06	Grad Rate 13-14	Grad Rate Increase
Colorado	18,031	10,546	41.5%	74.1%	77.3%	3.2% points
Aurora	1706	996	41.6%	61.8%	55.9%	-5.9% points
Denver	4017	1688	58.0%	51.7%	62.8%	11.1% points
Englewood	266	108	59.4%	38.6%	49.6%	11.0% points
Boulder	282	81	71.3%	85.7%	91.8%	6.1% points

In 2011, Dobo created Zero Dropouts to expand the breadth and scope of services of his education work geographically. With projects in Detroit, Chicago, Los Angeles, San Diego, Massachusetts, Washington D.C, and Florida, Zero Dropouts has been able to find thousands of dropouts and help them return to school to pursue their high school education. Within Colorado, ZD has worked with fourteen school districts across the Front Range, in the areas of Colorado Springs, Littleton, Englewood, Jefferson County, Aurora, Brighton, Monument and Greeley to create GED Plus and alternative school programming and to improve educational outcomes via strategic and systemic changes processes. Student segmentation data analysis work has also been completed with Englewood Schools, Lewis-Palmer Schools and Brighton 27J Schools to train school and district staff members how to drive systemic improvement of educational metrics based on analysis of student data.

Zero Dropouts' greatest systemic improvement and turnaround efforts have occurred in work with Greeley-Evans 6 School District. The work began on July 1, 2015, at the beginning of Superintendent Dr. Deirdre Pilch's tenure with Greeley. She and Dobo had partnered previously in Boulder Valley School District from 2009-2015, halving the dropout rate and adding six percentage points to the on-time graduation rate over the course of six years.

Initially the work with Greeley involved consulting with Dr. Pilch directly to evaluate and leverage the opportunities and challenges of her new school district. This involved a diagnostic review and analysis of longitudinal, student-level data from the district, along with CDE data, to determine each schools' effectiveness at keeping students on grade level and on track to an on-time graduation.

One of the first activities initiated was the creation of a monthly three-hour Graduates Initiative meeting led by Dobo and the Assistant Superintendent. Those invited to attend included district

curriculum staff, those responsible for ELL and federal title grants, high school principals, lead high school counselors, and post-secondary directors, and all others who directly impacted the improvement of the following key metrics:

- On-time graduation rate
- Annual dropout rate
- Post-secondary enrollment rate

The taskforce has been ongoing for the last three-and-one-half years and provides the main vehicles within the district to drive the key academic metrics.

From the data analysis, another area of improvement discovered was the high rate of ninth-grade failure within the district, particularly at Northridge High School. Research from the Consortium on Chicago School Research at the University of Chicago from 2006 indicated the most impactful way to improve on-time graduation rates was to ensure freshmen reach their sophomore year on-time by credit, so the district contracted with Zero Dropouts to add a ninth-grade intervention specialist at Northridge High School. The Ninth-Grade Intervention Specialist's goal is to decrease academic course failure for students identified as slightly off-track, meaning those with one to three course failures at the start of each semester. This position is still intact and is one of the factors behind increasing on-time graduation rates at Northridge High School over the last three years.

In Greeley 6, the dropout numbers in 2015 were relatively elevated at 365 dropped out students that year alone. Dobo co-supervised the district's existing dropout re-engagement specialist based off previous success of a comparable position he created in Boulder Valley School District. With a greater focus on re-engaging and bringing back those students who still had a chance to graduate, the dropout numbers began to reduce. The district recently contracted with Zero Dropouts to add a re-engagement specialist after realizing there was an ineffective district staff member in the position. In the first six months with a ZD employee, substantial improvements have been made. Students who have dropped out are now participating in engaging one-on-one conversations to be "heard" and, in turn, the district is starting to understand why dropping out has been an option for so many students. In fact, in surveying 190 students who chose the route to drop out, ZD found the following reasons for them to do so:

- I need to work for money- 75%
- I have family issues- 68%
- I don't like the school- 55%
- No one cares if I graduate- 35%
- I don't like the teachers- 32%
- I don't see value in school- 15%
- I was picked on or bullied- 8%

The goal has been to understand the story and challenges of each student who opted out in order to devise a programmatic element within the system to re-engage them. For each student that

hit an obstacle, there are five to ten others that most likely have that same obstacle. Listening to student voice from the most disenfranchised students allows a sort of market research to develop programs that keep students, engage them, and help them graduate on-time. With this system, the district has been able to substantially reduce annual dropout numbers from 356 in 2016 to 221 in 2018, a 38% reduction, with plans to reach below the 50% mark by the fifth year of operation.

Within the work of the Graduates Initiative, the widespread occurrence of behavior and academic problems within the middle schools was also an issue. Dobo lead many discussions on the topic and the district wanted to get ahead of the problem instead of addressing it later at the high school level. A junior high extension of the already successful Jefferson High School was created. Jefferson High School is a small alternative high school with an acceleration model that has an intentional school culture based on respect (the Discovery Model out of Fort Collins). Zero Dropouts and the district created a grade 7-9 school extension on a campus not far from Jefferson High School, calling it Jefferson Junior High School. Unsuccessful students at the comprehensive middle schools were referred to Jefferson Junior in order to have a smaller environment and the intentional school culture that the Discovery Model offered. Though the first year was challenging, with many of the referrals being students with behavior problems, the second year has proved successful in model and operation.

Zero Dropouts also collaborated with the district in increasing the on-time graduation rate. With three comprehensive high schools, Jefferson High School, and the Greeley Alternative Program (GAP), analysis began to identify which students were in each of the schools and programs and which students were experiencing success. Dobo quickly learned that the comprehensive high schools were being ineffective with a relatively large number of students. Students were languishing in the high schools, not earning credit on pace to graduate, and some lost hope and dropped out of school or were referred to Jefferson or GAP. Jefferson was reasonably successful with students, but the school often received students as seniors and only had a short time with them. Ideally, a student would have at least three years with the Discovery Model in order to make behavioral changes paired with the academic success to graduate on-time, along with being prepared for career-technical or concurrent enrollment classes at the local community college. GAP was filled with students who, because of age and lack of credits, had lost their opportunity to graduate on-time. There were waiting lists at Jefferson and GAP, so it appeared the wrong students were in alternative programs at the wrong point in time. In addition, the students that needed an alternative program to graduate on-time were on a waiting list, culminating in them missing their chance to graduate on time. Even with these challenges, ZD has been able to help the district improve their on-time graduation rate from 76.9% for the class of 2015 to 81.5% for the class of 2018, demonstrating a 4.6 percentage point increase.

In working closely with the new Assistant Superintendent, Dr. Rhonda Haniford, Dobo sorted through this Rubik's cube of a situation to establish a new policy. With the support of Dr. Pilch, communications were developed to support the priority of graduating students on-time. With the exception of special education students, who often need a bit more time, ZD and the district felt it was a disservice to keep students in high school beyond four years. The policy created a

referral grid based on student age and credit attainment to determine the best placement within the district for each student to achieve an on-time graduation outcome. Currently, the success of this policy is being hampered by the lack of confidence that counselors and principals have in GAP.

To improve GAP, Dobo worked with Dr. Haniford to write a response to a national RFP published by America's Promise Grad Nation for a two-year \$100,000 grant to accelerate on-time graduation rates within school districts. They devised a plan to improve GAP's poor on-time graduation and received the national grant, which was awarded in only two states and given to three district and community-based organizations. Since receipt of the grant in early 2018, ZD and the district have been implementing measures to turnaround GAP including interactive teaching and blended learning strategies, addition students to the program to increase resources for program implementation, coaching of school leaders, higher staff to student ratios, and access to concurrent enrollment classes and job opportunities.

In shifting focus to students who could graduate on-time, there were a significant number of students who still needed to be served but couldn't graduate on-time. Dr. Pilch asked Zero Dropouts to create a program to serve this group of students. Dobo created a GED Plus program, now in its second year, to serve 120 overage and under-credited students, helping them prepare to take and pass the GED. Along with blended learning instruction, Zero Dropouts provides wrap-around support services around mental health, transportation, jobs, and healthcare to improve educational outcomes. ZD also pays for students to take concurrent enrollment classes – either general education or career-technical courses – at Aims Community College. In a year and a half of operation, ZD has had almost forty students complete their GED with 25 students gaining college credit at the same time.

To begin working on the post-secondary enrollment metric, Dobo helped the district apply for the Colorado Opportunity Scholarship Initiative (COSI) grant through the Colorado Department of Higher Education. Greeley 6 received the grant and contracted with Zero Dropouts to hire a post-secondary advisor at Greeley Central High School to increase the percentage of Latino students graduating high school and enrolling in college. Through the second year of this grant, progress is being made in consolidating post-secondary services into Futures Centers where all parties can collaborate around similar post-secondary enrollment goals.

Through ongoing coaching of the Assistant Superintendent, ZD has been able to align the work of district federal programs, community-based organization programs, and district grants to drive the three essential metrics previously mentioned. ZD has helped the district access multiple iterations of the Colorado School Counselor Grant and the Colorado Dropout Re-engagement Grant to drive key work in stakeholder engagement with parents, students, and staff. Dobo worked as a consultant in each of these grants to drive the work and ensure that it stayed on course.

Through the three and a half years, Dobo's work with Dr. Pilch and Dr. Haniford has been both ongoing and organic in driving rates of on-time graduation, annual dropout, and post-secondary

enrollment. Agendas for the Graduates Initiatives meeting are created with feedback from Dobo, and Dobo coaches Dr. Haniford through the implementation of that work. In regular advising sessions, Dobo coaches Dr. Pilch to review the work each year and determine what the next big challenges and focus should be. Dobo has a consulting contract each year to work with Dr. Pilch and Dr. Haniford on challenges and opportunities to move the district forward and runs specific programs within the district, such as ninth-grade intervention, post-secondary advising, and the GED Plus program.

With the success of the Greeley-Evans 6 improvement work, ZD expanded its school program operations into Arvada, Littleton and two sites in Colorado Springs to create GED Plus and alternative high school programs in partnership with Jefferson County Schools in Arvada, and Littleton, Englewood and Jefferson County Schools in Littleton, and nine school districts within Colorado Springs.

Zero Dropouts' experience with Greeley-Evans 6 School District, along with the experience with thirteen other school districts across Colorado, and numerous projects across the nation, demonstrates the organization's ability to:

- Implement diagnostic review and turnaround efforts
- Create educational programming including alternative junior high schools, alternative high schools, GED Plus programs, ninth-grade intervention programs, and post-secondary advising programs
- Analyze and design operations
- Work with existing leadership staff
- Engage stakeholders

4. Organizational Structure.

See Appendix.

5. Organizational Theory of Action and Implementation.

Tolstoy said, "Happy families are all alike; every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way." School districts are similar – no one district's challenges are quite like another's. Zero Dropouts theory of action is firmly grounded in the customization of solutions. If Adams 14 is provided with tailored solutions, its unique challenges can be resolved.

While Zero Dropouts' staff is not large, the smaller size allows for agility in creating a customized approach. ZD will center its work with the District on research-based solutions used, and proven successful, previously (i.e. post-secondary advising based around Castleman and Page's Summer Melt: Supporting Low-Income Students Through the Transition to College, ninth-grade intervention based around the Consortium on Chicago School Research at the University of Chicago, culturally responsive education based around Singleton's Courageous Conversations).

As mentioned, Zero Dropouts will assemble a team of educational experts to engage and empower the district, community, and school representatives in meeting their shared goals.

On the community front, this work will require ZD to bring the District and community together as support systems for one another. In order to do so an economic development approach must be utilized – one that involves looking at all aspects of the community and the ultimate impact of student success. Also, staff working with students and the community need to reflect the demographics and diversity of the community. The end goal would be to create a full-service model where all services are eventually extended to all members of the community, not just students.

To successfully implement the theory of action, ZD will need to have conversations with all stakeholders, parents and students, foundations and community-based organizations, to ensure goals and metrics are aligned. Parallel conversations need to occur with all levels of district leadership from the Board to Department Heads. These asset-based discussions will lead to an overall assessment of all stakeholders, resources and challenges.

A common and compelling vision will then be co-created alongside all stakeholders, with a focus on robust community engagement. The work will involve direct, honest conversations, root cause analysis, both qualitative and quantitative diagnostic reviews, and interviews in order to uncover trends. All information uncovered will be shared immediately and transparently with the community. This approach utilized within other school districts has often led to the following turnaround implementation approaches:

- Graduates Initiative Taskforce – monthly meetings centered on the following super-metrics
 - On track to graduate
 - Annual dropout rates
 - Post-secondary enrollment
- Dropout re-engagement
- Evaluation of Federal programs
- Staff of Color Nurture and Recruitment Programs
- Grants
- Founding of a district foundation

Zero Dropouts is steeped in the notions of collaboration and stakeholder and community engagement to drive the creation of customized solutions for students, districts and communities.

6. Understanding of National, State, and Local Context.

Zero Dropouts currently works with districts and schools to improve their School Performance Frameworks – specifically the post-secondary readiness performance indicator, which includes graduation (on track to graduate), dropout, and matriculation (post-secondary enrollment rates).

ZD has a deep understanding of the SPF, how it is used to measure districts' and schools' success, and how to assist districts with improving their ratings. This experience positions Zero Dropouts to move the needle for Adams City High School, which has languished in priority improvement or turnaround status for the last eight years. The organization has extensive experience in dropout re-engagement – one of the weaker areas of Adams City High's SPF. On the elementary front, for Central and Rose Hill, ZD will be utilizing external assistance to address each schools' shortcomings on the SPF.

The Adams 14 community's dissatisfaction with the results of the district for years has been palpable to the larger Denver community. Zero Dropouts will take an asset-based approach, to identify the underutilized strengths in the community. The work will involve deep listening to identify undervalued assets that can be tapped in order to move the district forward effectively. Zero Dropouts has partnered with school districts in under-resourced communities and intends to utilize a robust community engagement plan to help to stabilize the district. ZD plans to partner with community and parent outreach, development, engagement and organizing groups such as Rise Colorado, Climb Higher Colorado, A+ Colorado, and Transform Education Now (TEN) to not only listen to the community, but to utilize that voice to drive better outcomes for Adams 14 schools.

ZD is excited to work with Beyond Textbooks in aligning standards-based instruction across schools and will further the impact by reviewing the curricular resources for text complexity and alignment to the Colorado Academic Standards, using a modified version of the nationally normed Equip Rubric. Additionally, common lesson plans and assessments will also include WIDA can do descriptors to make sure that English language learners are being given access to rigorous, grade level assignments.

Schools across the district will refine their course sequences to ensure that both concurrent enrollment (Early College) and Career and Technical Education opportunities exist to meet the needs of individual students' individual career and academic plans (ICAP). Student schedules will be revised to make sure that they are able to receive remediation or enrichment to meet their individual needs. Additionally, scheduling students into dedicated English language development (ELD) will be prioritized in order to increase English language proficiency, as measured by the ACCESS assessment.

Professional learning communities (PLCs) will be created across the district to bring together teachers of like content areas to receive professional learning rooted in building inquiry in the classroom in order to create a more culturally responsive classroom rooted in Zaretta Hamond's book Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain: Promoting Authentic Engagement and Rigor for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students. Additionally, during these PLCs, groups of teachers will analyze their own practice through data inquiry cycles using common performance tasks and learning progression rubrics based on the Colorado Academic Standards.

ZD's focus from inception has been underserved, at risk youth – including those from a variety of racial and ethnic backgrounds and intellectual needs. Many of its current services are honed to

engage or re-engage youth who have disengaged from an education system that is not built for their needs. Zero Dropouts specializes in finding the unique connection required to spark these students' interests and provide each student with a custom educational fit. The organization is also well positioned with experts in other areas of the work (i.e. Jesse Tijerina for culturally responsive education, Dr. Pilch for Title VI and ESSA compliance as well as negotiating with employee groups).

7. Organizational Capacity.

Zero Dropouts has a long track record of creating results in areas where school districts often struggle to do so. The work with Greeley 6 is an exemplar (see section 2.3). ZD's work with other districts in Colorado and nationwide provide the organization with a wide and deep pool of individuals who can be called upon for knowledge in areas where ZD has not had the opportunity to gain direct experience (see section 2.2). The organization will rely upon contracted consultants to add capacity and fill in the gaps where Zero Dropouts deems necessary.

8. Proposed Progress Monitoring Systems.

Full monitoring systems will be developed after a diagnostic review of district needs. However, Zero Dropouts will begin monitoring through the following methods, all focused around the state's "Systems for Improved Performance Rubric," District Performance Framework (DPF), and School Performance (SPF) Framework:

- Consistent data tracking (no less than monthly)
- Sprints aligned with SPF measures (8-12 weeks)
- Graduates Initiative Taskforce (monthly)
- Frequent deep dives with staff and community regarding various project areas including
 - Board coaching
 - Superintendent coaching
 - District-level department head coaching
 - Community, parent, and student engagement
 - Adams City High School
 - Lester Arnold High School
 - Curriculum and instruction
 - Concurrent and post-secondary enrollment and advisement
 - Cultural Learning and ELL
 - Middle Schools
 - Elementary Schools

While meeting timelines will need to be determined after initial analysis, ZD plans to approach the work in eight to twelve-week sprints. Post-sprint evaluation will occur along with lessons learned. Via several, shortened sprints, data analysis, review, and course adjustment can occur nimbly. Data analysis will occur through the SPF lens – i.e. if the DPF or SPF were reviewed today, what would the ranking be? Zero Dropouts will be able to use the DPF and SPF analysis to redirect

efforts and success of each sprint and to approach the “Meeting Expectation” over time. The organization will also track three key metrics: on-time graduation rate, dropout rate, and post-secondary enrollment rate to determine the effectiveness of the schools’ and district’s efforts.

Zero Dropouts will use the “District Systems for Improved Performance Rubric” to direct work – focusing on the six components: culture of continuous improvement, academic systems, talent management, differentiated support and accountability for low-performing schools, and board and community relationships. Success will be defined as moving the district and schools to a “securely in place” indicator on the Rubric as well as moving the District Performance Framework to “Accredited.” With Zero Dropouts directing the goals and outcomes of each sprint, the superintendent, board, and schools will be held responsible for moving the needle on their respective SPFs (ZD will coach, drive, and delegate work, with each school and district personnel being responsible for implementation). Ultimately, ZD would like to see dropout decreases, on-time graduation increases, and post-secondary enrollment increases.

9. Communication and Stakeholder Input.

Zero Dropouts will utilize design thinking and end user design approaches in gaining stakeholder and community input. Establishing a common vision and compelling reason and readiness to change will be essential to shaping the path moving forward for Adams 14.

In meeting with the stakeholders, ZD will remove any and all barriers by reaching out to the community and meeting them where they are at. The organization will take an asset-based approach, identifying underutilized strengths among stakeholders and in the community. The work will involve deep listening to identify undervalued assets that can be tapped to move the district forward effectively. Zero Dropouts has partnered with school districts in under-resourced communities and intends to utilize a robust community engagement plan to help with stabilizing the district.

Transparency is paramount. Community meetings will be held on a regular basis to share results of previously mentioned sprints and other key metrics. Zero Dropouts is committed to sharing bright spots and wins with the community as well as areas of needed improvement. ZD will partner with community and parent outreach, development, engagement and organizing groups such as Rise Colorado, Climb Higher Colorado, A+ Colorado, and Transform Education Now (TEN) to not only listen and help the community be heard, but to utilize that voice to align with district metrics and drive better outcomes for Adams 14 schools.

SECTION 3 - SCOPE OF SERVICES

Zero Dropouts’ approach for this work entails getting on the ground to grasp a deep understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing Adams 14 and the Commerce City community. This involves in-depth conversations with all stakeholders, including current staff and leadership at Adams 14, students, parents and community members to understand the history and move beyond that history to mutually agreed upon academic outcomes. In doing so,

the organization would build trust with all stakeholders and lay a foundation for advancing the District's mission of systemic improvement and a solid district infrastructure, resulting in increased academic outcomes and an exit from turnaround status.

Zero Dropouts has assembled a team of top-notch local Colorado experts in the major pieces of work that need to be accomplished over the next four years. Through working in the district and school turnaround and improvement educational field over the last two decades in Colorado, Dobo has identified and worked with some of the best educational leaders in the state. These experts have a deep concern and appreciation for Commerce City and the Adams 14 school district and want to do anything they can to help the district reach its goals. In assembling this team, the desire of many to come alongside of the district to help it reach its goals has been awe-inspiring.

Each expert in their specific area would work with existing district and school staff to complete a diagnostic review and assess the challenges and opportunities presenting them and co-create a plan to reach overall common metrics. The experts would then work alongside to coach staff to overcome obstacles and develop professionally.

Overall, Zero Dropouts' extensive work across the Front Range of Colorado has shown the following approaches and strategies tend to work most effectively:

- Customizing solutions that involve comprehensive organizational diagnostic reviews and assessments to tap local knowledge, support and expertise to develop customized strategic approaches to drive key educational metrics (Cookie cutter approaches will not be effective)
- Building and coordinating a local Colorado team of leaders to engage and empower the Adams 14 community, district and school representatives to meet their shared education goals
- Believing that the community has the answers and needs a methodology, plan and infrastructure to surface the solutions and empower local leaders
- Knowing the community and the school district are a system that need to be supported together, utilizing an economic development approach with wrap around support services. The community needs to be heard and staff needs to reflect the diversity of the community. There needs to be a full-service community school approach, with all services eventually extending the all members of the community.
- Using systemic approaches to impact students, peers, families, neighborhoods and community levels

The main areas of the project are outlined below, with initial diagnostic reviews and assessments of the work needing to be done in order to meet the overall goal of moving the graduating class of 2023 out of priority improvement and keeping each class at grade level according to appropriate educational metrics.

Board of Education Members & Superintendent

- Assessments and coaching for Board of Education members and the Superintendent by key Zero Dropouts consultants who have been effective board members and board chairs of other school districts, along with past and current Superintendents of other districts

Community, Parent and Student Engagement

- Intentional structured empathic conversations to understand the situation, build trust, and start movement forward toward solutions
- Conversations with students, parents and other community stakeholders, including foundations, community-based organizations, and businesses so that outcomes are aligned to key district metrics
- Conversations facilitated by Zero Dropout consultants who have done similar effective community engagement work in other districts, including Project VOYCE, YASSPA, Rise Colorado, Climb Higher Colorado, A+ Colorado, and Transform Education Now (TEN)

District Level Department Heads

- Diagnostic reviews, organizational assessments and conversations with district department heads
- Coaching for district department heads by key Zero Dropouts consultants who are experts in the running of school districts through years of experience in other school districts
- Create a Graduates Initiative Taskforce, with a monthly meeting to drive the three key district metrics – on-time graduation, annual dropout, and post-secondary enrollment
- Hire a dropout re-engagement specialist to reach out to students who have dropped out and help students return to school. Halve the dropout numbers within 3-5 years.
- Evaluate Federal Programs to ensure that they are aligned to district metrics
- Evaluate Extended Learning opportunities, including afterschool, Saturdays and summer programs to ensure they are driving key outcomes
- Evaluate teacher recruitment programs and create pipelines for diverse candidates to join the district, along with creating nurture programs to retain teachers
- Evaluate and ensure that the district pursues appropriate grant opportunities and those grants are aligned to district metrics
- Evaluate the district's capacity to analyze and utilize data effectively
- Evaluate the district's ability to effectively serve vulnerable subpopulations, such as ELL, migrant, homeless and those with IEP's
- Evaluate and coach around social-emotional learning

Adams City High School

- Diagnostic reviews, organizational assessments and conversations with Principal and administrative team along with coaching by Zero Dropouts consultants who have been effective principals in other districts
- Evaluate student segmentation of data to assess where every high school student is in relation to being on-track toward an on-time graduation, along with calculating projected on-time graduation rates for each class
- Implement interventions at each grade level to prevent course failure

- Utilize a MTSS Tiered Framework to determine which students are at grade level, slightly below grade level and significantly below grade level with strategies and interventions for each tier
- Ensure that every student has an on-time graduation plan

Lester Arnold High School

- Diagnostic reviews, organizational assessments, and conversations with all stakeholders by Zero Dropouts consultants who have created alternative schools and are principals of current alternative high schools that have moved out of turnaround status
- Conduct a student segmentation analysis to assess where every high school student is in relation to being on-track toward an on-time graduation
- Ensure there is an on-time graduation plan for every student
- For students who have missed their opportunity for an on-time graduation, assess the effectiveness of current GED programs to move students toward their goals

Concurrent Enrollment & Post-Secondary Advising

- Diagnostic reviews, organizational assessments and conversations with all stakeholders by Zero Dropouts staff who have managed effective concurrent enrollment programs for other school districts
- Increase partnership opportunities with all nearby post-secondary institutions, including Front Range Community College, University of Northern Colorado Aurora extension campus, Pickens Technical College, Community College of Aurora and Emily Griffith
- Evaluate post-secondary advising and augment FAFSA and college application completion efforts

Curriculum & Instruction

- Coordinate with the work of Beyond Textbooks to ensure that this important work is reaching the desired outcomes
- Zero Dropouts consultant will work with and coach those working on curriculum and instruction
- See section 2.6 for more information on curricular changes

Cultural Learning and ELL

- Zero Dropouts consultants who are currently doing extensive work in this area will evaluate current Adams 14 efforts and coaching current staff to reach the goals in these important areas
- See section 2.6 for more information on cultural learning and ELL

Middle School

- Zero Dropouts will integrate the current turnaround work at the middle schools into the overall turnaround effort of the district through working with Zero Dropouts consultants who have been involved in this work with CDE

Elementary School

- Zero Dropouts will evaluate existing efforts of Beyond Textbooks and coordinate with their work at Rose Hill and Central Elementary Schools. Additional resources and planning will be added as needed.

SECTION 4 – SCHEDULE

Six Month Assessment Plan

The initial six months of the project will entail an intensive diagnostic review, assessment and stakeholder engagement focus. The areas of focus are highlighted in Section 3- Scope of Service, specifically the Board of Education members, Superintendent, community, parent and student engagement, district department heads, Adams City High School, concurrent enrollment, curriculum and instruction, culture learning and ELL, middle school, and elementary school. This process will involve many conversations with stakeholders, along with the review of appropriate data and additional documents. The focus of these efforts will be a greater understanding by the Zero Dropouts team, as well as trust-building with stakeholders and the elements of an extended plan coming into focus. In addition, strong collaborative relationships will be built with external providers, such as Beyond Textbooks to get on the same page with larger district roles. Any immediately-obvious opportunities to get the implementation work started at Adams City High School, Rose Hill Elementary and Central Elementary, will be taken advantage of.

Six Month – Forty-Eight Month Plan

The plan from six months to forty-eight months represents the implementation portion of the plan. Again, Zero Dropouts anticipates that the major sections of the work will fall into the areas cited in the previous paragraph. Within Section 3- Scope of Services there are initial actions that need to happen almost immediately to ensure that ZD drives outcomes for the class of 2023, which is the current eighth grade class. During the initial six months and the first six months of the implementation plan, intensive efforts will begin in order to immediately impact the next five classes of graduates. These efforts will involve organizing and training the deans, assistant principals, and counselors within each grade level at Adams City High School to utilize a MTSS approach to provide support and interventions and encourage more and more of their students to graduate or get to their next grade level on-time by credit. Likewise, immediate efforts will be put into a dropout re-engagement specialist who will contact students who have dropped out to help them return to school. Also, swift efforts will be made to ensure that the next five graduation classes access post-secondary education at a higher rate.

Years two to four will involve monitoring the key educational metrics of on-time graduation for each class, annual dropout rate, and post-secondary enrollment rate, along with the milestones for each of these metrics. The milestones for on-time graduation rate will be to track every class starting with the first grade class of Fall 2019 to ensure that a higher percentage of the students each year are on-track to an on-time graduation. These metrics at the elementary and middle school level involve getting an increased number of students on-track by grade level, by math and reading scores. At the high school level, the milestone is decreasing academic course failure,

increasing attendance, and decreasing behavioral referrals, so that more students are on-track by credit at each grade level. The goal will be to increase the district on-time graduation rate by ten percentage points by the end of four years of operation.

In relation to dropout rates, the early milestones for this metric are attendance rates for pre-school through 6th grade. At grades seven to twelve, CDE tracks the actual dropout numbers. With these numbers, the milestones are the number of dropped out students who are engaged to return to school. The goal for the dropout metric will be to decrease the district dropout numbers by half by the end of four years of operation. This work involves meeting with every single student who has dropped out, hearing their story, and devising plans and programs for them and those like them to successfully return to school.

To increase post-secondary enrollment, the key milestones include improving concurrent enrollment, career-technical involvement, FAFSA completion rates and college application rates. Greater ties and collaboration with local post-secondary institutions will also drive this metric. In addition, post-secondary advisors who can track and support the senior class each year and follow them over the summer after graduation and into their first fall semester of their college career will help to mitigate the phenomena of summer melt. All along the way, data will be tracked, and metrics will be created to track the progress of each of the major stakeholder groups in driving the key metrics of the district. Each year, we will be able to evaluate our collective progress by watching the progress in the three metrics for the graduating class, and also by projecting graduating rates for the other eleven future graduating classes by looking at the milestone metric of how many students are on-track by reading, math or credit attainment, depending on the grade level.

Improvement science approaches along with continuous improvement strategies will be utilized so that we are always learning as a collective group, and that we are continuously improving. Surveys will be given periodically to stakeholder groups to evaluate the satisfaction with the progress the district is making.

SECTION 5 - REFERENCES

Please see section 2.3 on organizational experience for a comprehensive account of all school/districts/systems turnaround projects completed or begun within the last five years, along with detailed project descriptions and results. Below is a listing of the principal partners involved in this work across several districts.

Deirdre Pilch
Superintendent, Greeley-Evans District 6
dpilch@greeleyschools.org
970.310.8922

Rhonda Haniford
Assistant Superintendent of Secondary Schools, Greeley-Evans District 6
rhaniford@greeleyschools.org
720.383.8905

Diana Zakhem
Director of Secondary Support, Englewood Schools
diana_zakhem@engschools.net
303.806.2005

Brian Ewert
Superintendent, Littleton Public Schools
Bewert@lps.k12.co.us

Clay Abila
Director of Secondary Education, Littleton Public Schools
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303.347.3382

Karen Brofft
Superintendent, Lewis-Palmer School District
Kbrofft@lewispalmer.org
719.757.1400 (Direct), 303.919.8701 (Cell)

David Kollar
Director of Student Engagement, Jefferson County Schools
David.kollar@jeffco.k12.co.us
303.982.6794

Walt Cooper
Superintendent, Cheyenne Mountain Schools
Cooper@cmsd12.org
719.475.6100

APPENDIX A - Steve Dobo Resume

Versatile professional with a mix of scientific, analytical and people skills with in-depth knowledge and experience in the areas of strategic student pipeline analysis, tech-enabled educational services, at-risk youth, alternative education, public schools, career-technical schools, career counseling and business.

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

Education

Master of Education Degree in Career Counseling, Colorado State University

Master of Science Degree Coursework in Atmospheric Science, Colorado State University

Bachelor of Arts Degree in Physics, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

- Contributed Chapter to The Leader Reader- Narratives of Experience, edited by Darrin Griffiths, Scott Lowrey & Mark Cassar- 2018
- Contributed Chapter to Reengagement: Bringing Students Back to America's Schools, edited by Andrew Moore- 2016
- Guest Speaker in Introduction to Political Sciences classes at UCD- 2015-2016
- Contributed Chapter to America's Forgotten Student Population: Creating a Path to College Success for GED Completers, edited by Angela Long and Christopher Mullen- 2014
- Founder & CEO of Zero Dropouts – 2013- Present
- Creator of the Drop in Denver interactive video campaign to entice dropouts to return to school- 2013
- TEDx Talk Presenter for Crestmoor Park, Denver – 2013
- Recipient of the Mayor's Diversity Award from the City of Denver Strategic Partnership Commission- 2012
- Commissioned Bob Balfanz of Johns Hopkins University to conduct a groundbreaking research study culminating in the publication of "Advancing the Colorado Graduates Agenda- Understanding the Dropout Problem and Mobilizing to Meet the Graduation Challenge." - 2009
- Named one of the Denver Post Coloradoans Who Made A Difference in 2008
- Co-Founder of the National League of Cities National Reengagement Network- 2008
- Founder & Co-Founder of 10 alternative charter and contract schools - 2007- Present
- Co-creator and presenter at the CDE annual dropout prevention conference- 2007
- Contributed Chapter to Colorado Educators Study Homeless and Highly Mobile Students- 2005
- Topic of a 4-part Denver Post series on efforts to help Denver dropouts return to school- 2006
- Founder & CEO of Colorado Youth for a Change- 2005-2013
- Presenter at multiple conferences, including Colorado Association of School Boards, Colorado Association of School Executives, Colorado Department of Higher Education, Colorado Department of Education, National Youth Employment Council, American Youth Policy Forum, National Dropout Prevention Center, National League of Cities, National Governor's Association and Gateway to College
- Keynote speaker for high school graduation ceremonies- Ongoing

CEO & President (2011- Present)

Zero Dropouts, LLC

Denver, Colorado

- ◆ Founded a national organization inspired by the remarkable potential of all youth and dedicated to the mission of solving America's high school dropout crisis

- ◆ Conducted educational projects in Las Vegas, Detroit, Chicago, San Diego, Washington DC, Durham, and along the front range of Colorado
- ◆ Designed and implemented the Drop in Colorado Campaign, a city-wide outreach tech-enabled marketing effort to engage out-of-school youth back to school
- ◆ Consulted with school districts in Greeley, Aurora, Englewood, Monument, Colorado Springs, and Los Angeles to help them improve the three key metrics of on-time graduation, dropout and post-secondary enrollment rates
- ◆ Co-created alternative schools in Las Vegas, Detroit, Chicago, Englewood and Greeley
- ◆ Created and managed programs helping refugees, adult learners, high school seniors and opportunity youth take the next step in their education and careers
- ◆ Created GED Plus programs serving over 300 students per year in Greeley, Arvada, Littleton and Colorado Springs with 14 partnering school districts and 4 community colleges

Founder and Executive Director (2005- 2013)

Colorado Youth for a Change

Denver, Colorado

- ◆ Founded a nonprofit organization with the mission of solving Colorado's dropout crisis
- ◆ Used national research models and local student data analysis to create programs in the areas of dropout recovery, dropout intervention and creation of multiple pathways to graduation
- ◆ Built a \$3 million dollar budget organization helping over 400 dropouts return to school each year across 7 school districts, along with creating 7 high school programs for at-risk youth to continue their education
- ◆ Co-created the Colorado Graduates Initiative to drive Governor Ritter's pledge to cut dropout numbers in half in Colorado within 10 years
- ◆ Helped lower the Boulder Valley School District annual dropout numbers by 75% within 5 years

Education and Employment Manager (2002-2005)

Urban Peak

Denver, Colorado

- ◆ Managed all functions of a shelter housing 40-60 runaway and homeless youth per night
- ◆ Hired and supervised a staff of 12 shelter counselors, along with employees for maintenance and kitchen
- ◆ Reorganized the shelter to make more efficient use of resources, specializing in the area of recruitment
- ◆ Coordinated all aspects of the education and employment programs across the agency, including the administration of WIA, YTP and United Way grants
- ◆ Worked in partnership with PS1 Charter School to create a satellite program at the Spot facility and the Academy of Urban Learning DPS charter school for homeless youth

Business Consultant (1999-2002)

Independent Consultant

Denver, Colorado

- ◆ Completed major assignments in human resource consulting for various sized businesses, specializing in the area of recruitment
- ◆ Directed the staffing function for a top 10 residential homebuilding company (Richmond American Homes), establishing the processes and procedures for the recruiting function, hiring the staff to manage the process, and conducting executive recruiting for start-up operations across the country
- ◆ Directed the human resource functions for OneMediaPlace (an internet advertising start-up company in San Francisco), while conducting a national search for a Senior Vice President of

Human Resources

- ◆ Conducted human resource and business strategy consulting to Ford Office Interiors (a small office furniture business with locations in Boulder and Colorado Springs), including candidate searching and staffing of regional offices
- ◆ Led the recruiting efforts to hire 200 customer service representatives, telecommunications technicians, and sales representatives within 3 months for the Chicago office of 21st Century Telecom

Recruiting and Staffing Manager (1996-1999)

MCI WorldCom

Oakbrook Terrace, IL

Telecommunications Inc.

Chicago, IL

- Created and implemented a start-up technical recruiting function for MCI WorldCom for the region east of the Mississippi, comprising approximately 6000-8000 employees
- Recruited candidates using the company web page, Internet web sites, employee referrals, networking, military sources, newspaper advertisements, radio spots and job fairs
- Designed and managed the recruiting function supporting a TCI Chicago employee base of 1300
- Utilized innovative mass recruiting methods to hire over 150 cable installers within 6 months and 100 call center customer service representatives within a two month period
- Named Employer of the Year for innovative recruiting practices by Jobs For Youth (a non-profit organization training at-risk youth to work in corporate America) out of over 500 Chicago corporations
- Designed career development and compensation strategies for cable installers

Financial Analyst (1995-1996)

Elliott Wave International

Gainesville, GA

- Wrote financial commentary to forecast price changes in all major stock, bond, and currency markets

Family Services Program Coordinator (1991-1994)

City of Cambridge Multi-Service Center

Cambridge, MA

Tri-City Community Action Program

Malden, MA

- Directed multiple programs providing housing and supportive services to low-income families who were homeless or at-risk of becoming homeless
- Acted as interim director of the Multi-Service Center for the Homeless
- Created innovative programs and assisted with writing proposals to secure funding for innovative housing assistance programs
- Recruited, trained and supervised counselors to work with homeless families
- Compiled comprehensive reports on program and fiscal activities

Youth Services and Leadership Program Coordinator (1989-1991)

Jefferson County Public Schools

Denver, CO

Center for Applied Prevention Research

Boulder, CO

- Designed and coordinated all aspects of an innovative dropout prevention program which trained high-risk teens to act as tutors for at-risk elementary students
- Created and conducted experiential training retreats for team-building and skill-building in tutoring

- Researched and identified exemplary national and local youth leadership and service programs

Parent-Teen Mediation Program Director (1987-1989)

City of Boulder Youth Services Division

Boulder, CO

- Designed, planned and operated a federal pilot demonstration program to utilize community volunteers to mediate conflicts between parents and runaway teens
- Recruited, trained and supervised volunteers to conduct mediation sessions
- Designed and conducted an experiential 40-hour volunteer training program
- Created a marketing and public relations program and monitored the fiscal operations of the program
- Wrote grant continuation proposals and developed future funding strategies

Career Counseling Center Director (1985-1987)

Boulder Valley Schools & Boulder Employment & Training

Boulder, CO

Northeastern Junior College

Sterling, CO

- ◆ Planned and implemented a comprehensive career counseling program serving students and adults
- ◆ Developed and coordinated grant proposals to establish partnerships between schools, federal agencies, business and community resources
- ◆ Presented educational forums for school counselors and community agency staff
- ◆ Conducted individual and group counseling to facilitate the social and academic adjustment of students to college
- ◆ Taught a peer counseling class and supervised a peer counseling program
- ◆ Participated in the preparation and coordination of new student orientation
- ◆ Assisted in the training and evaluation of resident hall staff

APPENDIX B – Zero Dropouts Organization Chart

■ GED PLUS Program

■ Outreach Program

